
DEPARTMENT POLICY

In the majority of cases, State Emergency Relief (SER) is sufficient to resolve threats to health and safety. However, due to the nature of emergencies and variations in SER group circumstances, unusual situations may exist.

Emergency Services (ES) funds are allocated to each local office to provide assistance when:

- SER does not cover the requested service.
- The amount needed exceeds the SER payment limits.

USE OF ES FUNDS

An SER application must be submitted and eligibility must be determined prior to any service or cost being paid using ES funds. SER caps should be exhausted before ES allocations are utilized.

Any issuance of ES Funds must be recorded in the Bridges electronic case record. A service description, need reason and payment details must be entered in case comments.

The first priority of emergency funding is to assure that clients have safe and decent housing, and providing needed services to help persons or families remain in their own home. ES funds may be used to expand payment maximums if **all** other eligibility requirements have been met.

Example: An SER group needs their septic system repaired at a cost of \$1650. The group has the full \$1500 non-energy lifetime limit available and meets all other eligibility requirements for home repairs. However, they do not have the extra \$150 and have been unable to find private or community agencies that will contribute the \$150 difference. The \$1500 limit may be paid from SER and the additional \$150 supplemented from ES funds.

ES COVERED SERVICES

1. Emergency Food: Issue emergency food if the need results from an event that is beyond the group's control and the group was not eligible for Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits in the current month.

ES funds may be used to:

- Replace food within 60 days from the date of fire, civil disorder or natural/chemical disaster.
- Prevent children from being removed from the home.
- Allow children to return to the home.

The daily food allowance is \$3.00 per day per SER group member for a maximum of 15 days, or the shortest period of time that meets the SER group's needs.

Verification is required and may include any of the following:

- Fire report.
 - Police report.
 - Statement from the MDHHS services worker or manager regarding the removal or return of the children to the home.
 - Newspaper article or other reliable source that provides the date and details of the fire, disorder or disaster.
2. Homeless Prevention includes mortgage and back taxes to avoid eviction or foreclosure. Rental payments and security deposits are also allowed to establish or maintain safe housing. Mortgage and property tax payments are only allowed for homeowners or individuals who are purchasing their home. Housing must be affordable.
 3. Emergency home repair is used to prevent removal of a family from their home for health and safety reasons. Two quotes (minimum) must be obtained from licensed providers, with the lesser of the two being awarded the home repair work. Home repairs are only allowed for homeowners or individuals who are purchasing their home. Housing must be affordable.
 4. Non-energy utilities (water, sewer and cooking gas); payment may be issued if the client is in arrears on non-energy related utility payments, and at risk of shut off.
 5. Emergency Medical: MDHHS may pay the provider for the actual cost of the service, up to \$500, or the minimum amount needed to resolve the emergency if the services are not covered by a third-party resource, Medicaid, Medicare or a health insurance provider.

6. Limited-cost household goods: Includes one table with chairs and beds sufficient for all household members, with a \$500 maximum. Room air conditioners may be purchased or repaired only if the recipient is 55 or older **or** provides a statement from a physician that air conditioning is medically necessary.
7. Limited-cost household items: Includes dishes, silverware, pots and pans, brooms or mops, bed sheets and pillows, and towels, with a \$100 maximum issuance.
8. Emergency medical transportation: Includes a one-time trip to a hospital or doctor's office for a life threatening situation or illness, a trip to the pharmacy to fill a prescription for an illness, or a trip to resolve another type of medical emergency. Ongoing trips for regular office visits, family visitations, etc., are not covered.
9. Other Limited-cost Items: Contribution to a burial is limited to the cost of an oversized casket. No other burial costs are allowed. Clothing is limited to the replacement of clothing lost in a natural or chemical disaster, fire, civil disorder or other catastrophic event.
10. Bulk Purchases are allowed with the following stipulations:
 - Bulk purchases shall be made according to MDHHS purchasing guidelines.
 - Bulk purchases may be made up to \$1,000. Purchases exceeding \$1,000 require central office approval.
 - Gift cards must **not** exceed \$25 in value.
 - Purchases may be made on a monthly or quarterly basis in anticipation of the use during that period. Purchases must not carry over to the next month or quarter.
 - Purchases made during the last quarter of the fiscal year must not be more than the quarterly average purchased for the preceding three quarters.
 - The items **must** be purchased and used in the same fiscal year.

- Bulk purchases are to relieve one time emergencies such as: diapers, baby formula or small incremental gift cards, up to the maximum of \$25 each.
 - Documentation, including the client's name, case number, and purpose for issuing the item **must** accompany the distribution log and fiscal records, with a copy filed in the client's case record.
11. Payments and invoices must contain the proper documentation prior to being issued.
 12. Services that are not listed in this item require a Program Policy Office Exception. The CM-23, Contract Program Policy Exception Request, must be completed and faxed to the SER Program Policy Office.

Example: An SER group consisting of an elderly man who is in need of a shower chair, raised toilet seat and grab bar in order to live independently in his own home would not qualify for these benefits under SER but an exception could be requested by the local office to use ES funds.

UNALLOWABLE SERVICES

Note: ES funds may **not** be used to:

- Establish SER eligibility for non-energy services.
- Pay asset copayments.
- Pay energy services, (heat, electricity, furnace repair or replacement).
- Pay legal or court costs.
- Repair or purchase a vehicle.
- Purchase bus passes or tokens or pay for any other travel expenses, unless it meets the criteria of medical transportation, above.

- Pay or reimburse for employment related costs such as car repair.
- Reimburse a provider, individual, or MDHHS employee.
- Pay for physical examinations or medical treatment not listed previously in this item.
- Pay for medical records or photocopies.
- Establish emergency shelter contracts.
- Pay for any item or service other than those identified as covered services.

LEGAL BASE

Mich Admin Code, R 400.7001 et seq.